



SAN MATEO-FOSTER CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

CONFIDENTIAL

Via Email (grandjury@sanmateocourt.org)

The Honorable Amarra A. Lee
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Jenarda Dubois
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Response to the 2020-2021 Grand Jury Report entitled "Building a Racially & Ethnically Diverse Teaching Workforce: A Challenge for Our Schools."

Dear Judge Lee:

The San Mateo-Foster City School District (the "District") has received and reviewed the 2020-2021 Grand Jury Report entitled "Building a Racially & Ethnically Diverse Teaching Workforce: A Challenge for Our Schools." We appreciate the Grand Jury's interest in this matter. Having reviewed and considered the Grand Jury's Findings and Recommendations, the District responds below pursuant to section 933.05 of the California Penal Code.

Please be advised that the District presented the Grand Jury Report to its Board of Trustees, and the District's Board approved these responses, on October 7, 2021.

Findings:

- 1. In San Mateo County, the ethnic diversity of teachers does not closely mirror that of the students they teach. A countywide demographic report, generated by the San Mateo County Office of Education, including teacher/student ethnicity, would be of value to all school districts in their recruitment efforts.*

With respect to the statement that "[i]n San Mateo County, the ethnic diversity of teachers does not closely mirror that of the students they teach[.]" the District lacks information to fully agree or disagree with this Finding given that it did not conduct the research related to this Report. However, the District accepts the Grand Jury's Finding for the purposes of this response.



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With respect to the statement that “[a] countywide demographic report, generated by the San Mateo County Office of Education, including teacher/student ethnicity, would be of value to all school districts in their recruitment efforts, the District agrees with this Finding.

2. *Teachers frequently leave schools in San Mateo County for higher pay in other districts, to the detriment of the students being taught.*

The District agrees with this Finding.

3. *School districts in San Mateo County compete nationally for a limited pool of teacher candidates; those diminishing candidate pools result in limited-teacher diversity.*

The District agrees with this finding.

4. *Cost of living and housing affordability in San Mateo County are two major barriers which continue to impede our school districts’ ability to attract, recruit, and retain a diverse teacher workforce.*

The District agrees with this finding.

5. *Public-school districts in the County are not permitted by State law to consider race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in hiring. It is common practice for districts to interview all candidates who meet the qualifications for an open teaching position, further complicating hiring to meet diversity goals.*

The District agrees with this finding.

6. *The San Mateo County Office of Education has an opportunity to articulate and guide an educational vision for the entire County to the benefit of school districts and without direct involvement in individual school district staffing and policy decisions.*

The District agrees with this finding.

7. *Teacher residency and internship programs take time to produce results but school districts could benefit by increased participation in these programs.*

The District agrees with this finding.



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8. *School districts invest varying degrees of effort into the process of recruiting a diverse teaching pool. While some rely on traditional strategies, others have found creative solutions to increase diversity in the teaching workforce.*

The District lacks information to fully agree or disagree with this Finding given that it did not conduct the research related to this Report. However, the District accepts the Grand Jury's Finding for the purposes of this response.

9. *The San Mateo County School Boards Association Equity Network, created in 2019-20, has been, for much of its existence, restricted to meeting online due to the pandemic. As a result, the group has had limited opportunities to work collaboratively to help build capacity for thoughtful, equity-driven decisions. Consequently, as of January 2021, their ability to both identify and deliver on stated outcomes has been limited.*

The District lacks information to fully agree or disagree with this Finding given that it did not conduct the research related to this Report. However, the District accepts the Grand Jury's Finding for the purposes of this response.

10. *School district superintendents and human resource personnel in San Mateo County agree that students of color benefit from having educators who look like them but are not always certain how to recruit or retain teachers of color.*

The District agrees with this finding.

11. *A majority of school district strategic plans and other aspirational documents do not address teacher diversity nor are those plans easily accessible by the community.*

The District lacks information to fully agree or disagree with this Finding given that it did not conduct the research related to this Report. However, the District accepts the Grand Jury's Finding for the purposes of this response.

Recommendations:

1. *By June 30, 2022, school districts should include a commitment to teacher diversity in strategic plan, goals and/or objectives, using the strategic plan developed by the San Mateo County Office of Education as a guide. These aspirational documents should be publicly and prominently displayed on their websites.*



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The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The District intends to implement the recommendation by June 30, 2022.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Diego Ochoa
Superintendent
San Mateo-Foster City School District